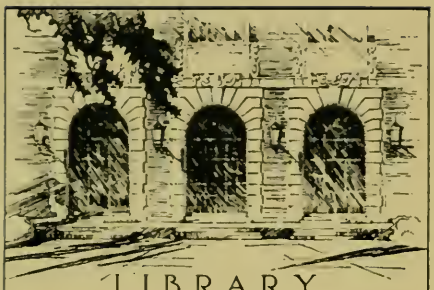

BETWEEN
THE LIVING
AND
THE DEAD.

BY THE

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BETWEEN THE LIVING AND THE DEAD.

"And he stood between the living and the dead; and the plague was stayed."—NUMB. xvi. 48.

ON previous Sundays, my brethren, I have endeavoured, at the request of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Evidence, to set before you "the Universe as a manifestation of God's eternal power and godhead," by showing you, first, that its beauty was a seal of the handiwork of its Creator; and then that neither in its illimitable vastness, nor in the steady uniformity of the laws which govern it, is there anything to shake, but rather very much to strengthen, our faith in God. Such truths may be deeply practical if we will make them so; if we will remember that this is the God whose eye is ever upon us; that "this God is our God for ever and ever, and shall be our guide unto our death." And such truths have also a deep bearing on the subject of which I am bidden to speak to-day. For if there be one thing which would stand out clearly from such a contemplation of the awfulness of God and yet the love which could send His own Son to die for us, it is the guilt involved in a wilful depravation of His work, the dreadful consequences which must follow—which, as a fact, are daily following—from the flagrant violation of His laws. Wilful sin, a wilful sacrifice of duty to self-indulgence; a wilful choice of the lower and baser instead of the higher and nobler, is disastrous in the individual; and pitiable indeed is the shipwreck which it causes to the hope and the happiness of life. But in the case of a nation, still more disastrous is the loss, still more overwhelming the shipwreck. Take the history of any nation under the sun; watch its rise and watch its ruin, and see whether, in every instance, its ruin has not been the retribution of its guilt. You may not be able to see exactly *why* it was, but you are forced to see that so it was; and the secular historian will tell you as emphatically as the theologian, that to every nation in its turn sin has meant, first, weakness, then decay, lastly, destruction.

What ruined Judah? In its first stage, idolatry; in its second stage, Pharisaism. What sapped the strength of Greece? Sensuality. What broke the iron arm of Rome? Again, sensuality joined with slavery. What ruined Spain? Avarice. What ruined Venice? Pride. What ruined the Papacy? Ambition. If ever England be ruined, what will be her ruin? Her national sin whatever that national sin may be. And what is the national sin of England? Alas! there are many sins in England, but ask the unbiassed opinion of those who know; ask the unsuspected testimony of the English judges; ask the exceptional experience of the English clergy; ask the unguarded admissions of the English Press; and their unanimous answer would be, I think, as would be the unanimous answer of every thoughtful man in this vast assembly,—the national sin of England is drunkenness; the national curse of England is drink.

2. My brethren, it has been my duty more than once of late to speak of intemperance, and I am willing to bear the penalty. On this subject it is an imperative duty that the pulpit should not be always silent; but if I am not afraid to speak the truth, I do earnestly desire to speak truth only, and to speak that truth in love. Far from the sanctity of this place be vulgar exaggeration. This Abbey is sacred to Truth; sacred to Faith; sacred to Charity. Were I to say from this place one word that was unwarrantable, it would seem to me as though the immortal spirits of the great men whose memorials stand thick around us were frowning on me in disdain. But they would have still more cause to frown if I glozed over the truth with lies. To exaggerate is one thing; to be charged with exaggeration is quite another. There are, alas! aspects of this matter which it is impossible to exaggerate, and, though I shall touch only on facts admitted and undeniable, the worst facts are far too bad to be here spoken of at all. And if there be any here who are concerned in the maintenance of a trade from which flow such dangerous consequences, while I ask them to think over their responsibility, and of that strict and solemn account which they, as well as we, must one day give before the judgment-seat of Christ, they may rest assured that I speak of a system, not of individuals, and that, as I never have, so neither now will I, say one word which is meant to reflect painfully on them. But, knowing drunkenness to be a ruinous vice,

and seeing that the results which flow from it are of the darkest and most appalling character, I therefore desire to arrest—more and more to arrest—so far as I can, the attention of the people of England to this crying and wide-wasting evil. To the intemperate I am not speaking, though from my very soul I pity them; nor to abstainers, to whom I can say nothing new; but I do want every English man and woman in this Abbey, and every English-speaking man and woman whom, in any form, or by any means, these words can reach, to face the stern facts which I shall touch upon, to ask themselves how far they mean to be entangled in responsibility for them; and how long they will, and why they will, look on such facts unmoved. How weak, alas! are poor human words; how timid poor human hearts! But, oh! if that Great Angel of the Apocalypse could speak, and if his voice were in the thunder's mouth, he could not speak too loud to warn England of the sin and misery which are in the midst of her—to urge her to shake out of her bosom this burning coal of fire.

3. "Woe," says Jeremiah, "woe to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower." The allusions to drunkenness in Scripture and in classical literature are not unfrequent. Yet drunkenness was not the prevalent sin of ancient times; and an ancient Spartan, an ancient Roman, or an ancient Hebrew would have stared with contemptuous disgust at the sights which in Christian England are familiar as a jest. It was not that they were less prone to sin, but they were less pelted with temptation. Southern and Eastern nations have never been so drunken as Northern; and ancient nations were ignorant of that deadly spirit which has wrought a havoc so frightful among us. The simple wines of antiquity were incomparably less deadly than the stupefying and ardent beverages on which £150,000,000 are yearly spent in this suffering land. The wines of antiquity were more like syrups: many of them were not intoxicant, many more intoxicant in but a small degree, and all of them, as a rule, only taken when largely diluted with water. The sale of these comparatively harmless vinous fluids did not bear the remotest resemblance to the drink trade among us, nor did the same ghastly retinue of evils follow in its train. They contained, even when undiluted, but four or five per cent. of alcohol, whereas some of our common wines contain seventeen per cent., and the

maddening intoxicants of Scotch and English cities contain the horrible amount of fifty-four per cent. of alcohol. Take but one illustration of the difference of ancient and modern days. Our blessed Lord when He lived on earth traversed Palestine from end to end. He saw many a sinner, and many a sufferer ; He saw the lepers, and healed them ; He saw weeping penitent women, and restored them to honour and holiness again ; there is not the slightest trace that he ever once witnessed that spectacle of miserable degradation, a drunken man, or that yet more pitiable spectacle of yet deadlier degradation, a drunken woman. He who scathed the obstinate formalism of the Pharisee ; He who flung into the sea with a millstone round his neck the corrupter of youthful innocence, what would He have said, what would He have felt, had He heard the shrieks of women beaten by drunken husbands ; had He seen little children carried into the hospital stricken down by their drunken mothers' senseless or infuriated hands ? Ah ! estimate these things as He would have estimated them, and then will you dare to sneer at those who for very shame, for very pity, for the mere love of their kind and country, cannot let these things be so ?

4. And alas ! my brethren, but for these ardent spirits England need not be a drunken nation ; for the day was when she was not a drunken nation. Listen, my brethren, to a page of your own history. In the reign of that great king, King Henry V., who enlarged this Abbey—in his army of heroic victors, the army of Agincourt—drunkenness was deemed an utter disgrace ; and King Henry was so impressed with the curse of it that he wanted to cut down all the vines in France. Not yet accustomed, as one has said. "to pour oil of vitriol on the roses of youth," not yet accustomed to apply hot and rebellious liquors in the blood of her children, England at that day might have said to one or other of her then not numerous drunkards :—

> "I know thee not, old man ; fall to thy prayers.
> How ill white hairs become a fool and jester,
> I long have dreamt of such a kind of man—
> So surfeit-swell'd, so old, and so profane ;
> But, being waked, I do despise my dream,
> . . . . . .
> . . . And know the grave doth gape
> For thee thrice wider than for other men."

The great antiquary, Camden, who lies buried there, says that in his day drunkenness was a recent vice; and other writers say that "We brought the foul vice of drunkenness from our wars in the Netherlands, as we had brought back the foul disease of leprosy from the Crusades." In the bad reaction which followed the Restoration, when the people broke loose from the stern but noble bonds of Puritan restriction to plunge into abominable licence, the evil habit was enormously increased, and many a great statesman and great writer of the subsequent epoch—a Pitt, an Addison, a Bolingbroke, a Walpole, a Carteret, a Pulteney—shattered his nerves and shortened his life by drink. But it was about the year 1724, as we are told by the last historian of the eighteenth century, Mr. Lecky, from whose "History of the Eighteenth Century" I borrow some of these facts, that "gin drinking began to affect the masses, and it spread with the rapidity and violence of an epidemic." "Small," he says, "as is the place which this fact occupies in English history, it was probably—if we consider all the consequences that have flowed from it—the most momentous in that eighteenth century," because from that time "the fatal passion for drink was at once and irrevocably planted in the nation." Yes, it was only some 150 years ago that there began the disastrous era of the dramshop and the gin-palace; from that era ardent spirits began to madden the brain, to poison the blood, to brutalise the habits of the lowest classes. Distillation replaced the comparatively harmless wines of our forefathers by those poisonous draughts of liquid fire which are at this moment the scathing, blighting, degrading curse of myriads, the fellest and the foulest temptation with which our working classes have to struggle. The Jewish rabbis have a legend that, when the first vineyard was planted, Satan rejoiced, and said to Noah that he should have his account in the results; and in truth the wine-cup, which poets so extol, is the cause, as Solomon has told us, of woes enough; but if ever the spirits of evil hailed a potent ally with shouts of triumph, it must have been when that thing was discovered which, regarded as a harmless luxury by the virtuous, acts as a subtle and soul-destroying ruin of the unsuspecting—that thing in the use of which "intemperance, the great murderer of millions, doth creep for shelter into houses of moderation."

5. But to return to history. Ardent spirits had not long been introduced when the Grand Jury of Middlesex, in a powerful presentment, declared that much the greatest part of the poverty, the robberies, the murders of London, might be traced to this single cause. Painted boards informed the poor that for 1d. they might purchase drunken stupefaction, and, as though the adjuncts of the sty were necessary to complete the accessories of truly swinish degradation, the straw in the cellars was gratuitously supplied. Even the morals of the eighteenth century—bad as they were—did not so acquiesce in this public demoralisation as we, with our consciences seared with the hot-iron of custom, are content to acquiesce. In 1736 a strenuous attempt was made to stem the rising tide of shame and ruin, by placing prohibitive duties on all spirituous liquors. In 1743 those duties were enormously diminished—partly on the futile plea of stopping illicit distillation, but mainly to replenish the Exchequer for the German wars of George II. Against the Gin Act, as it was called, Lord Chesterfield, the most polished and brilliant peer of his day, flung his whole influence, alas, in vain! When I quote his words to you, remember that you are listening to a professed man of the world, perfectly cool-headed, the mirror of fashion, the idol of society, yet speaking simply as a patriot from ordinary observation of the notorious effects of what he calls "the new liquor." Had he used such language now he would have been called an intemperate Pharisee; but he spoke to an age not yet hardened by familiarity to the horrors of dram-drinking. "Vice, my lords," he said, "is not properly to be taxed, but to be suppressed; and heavy taxes are sometimes the only means by which that suppression can be attained. Luxury, my lords, may very properly be taxed. But the use of those things which are simply hurtful—hurtful in their own nature, and in every degree—is to be prohibited. If their liquors are so delicious that the people are tempted to their own destruction, let us at length, my lords, secure them from these fatal draughts by bursting the vials that contain them. . . . Let us crush these artists in human slaughter, which have reconciled their countrymen to sickness and to ruin, and spread over the pitfalls of debauchery such baits as cannot be resisted. . . . When I consider, my lords, the tendency of this bill, I find it calculated only for the propagation of disease, the suppression of industry,

and the destruction of mankind. For this purpose, my lords, what could have been invented more efficacious than shops at which poison may be vended, poison so prepared as to please the palate, while it wastes the strength and kills only by intoxication?" So spoke, so thought Lord Chesterfield, about the ardent spirits which are now sold on every day in the week at 140 licensed houses within a small radius of the Abbey, into most of which hundreds of men, of women, and of children, will enter this very day. And he did not stand alone. If you would know what your fathers thought of these things, look at Hogarth's ghastliest pictures of Rum-lane and Gin-alley. If you doubt Art, take the testimony of Science. In 1750 the London physicians drew up a memorial to the effect that there had been 14,000 cases of fatal illness attributable to gin alone; and Benson, Bishop of Gloucester, wrote, "Our people have become what they never were before, cruel and inhuman. These accursed liquors, which, to the shame of our Government are so easily to be had, have changed their very nature"; and about the same time the entire bench of bishops protested against the Gin Act, as founded on the "indulgence of debauchery, the encouragement of crime, and the destruction of the human race.

6. It was amid these protests of men and these warnings of God that in England the shameful and miserable tale began. You know, or you may know, and you ought to know, how it has gone on. The extent, indeed, of the calamity you do not and cannot know. That can be fully known to Him only who hears, and not in vain, the sighs and moans that lade the air with their quivering misery; to Him alone who can estimate the area of wreck and ruin, of human agony and human degradation, which is represented by the fact that this country spends £150,000,000 a-year on drink, and that in this country there are, besides the many who drink, 600,000 drunkards. No, you cannot estimate it: you have not even one fraction of such knowledge about it as we have who have seen it; but need you ignore it? Can you live in the very midst of facts so ugly and yet not lift a finger to make them better? Read for yourselves. Judge for yourselves. Refute these facts if you can; would to God that you could, but, alas! you cannot. Convince yourselves first that alcohol, however much you may like it, is needless, seeing that the lives of four million total

abstainers who never touch it are better in any insurance office than those of other men; and that among our 20,000 prisoners—most of them brought there by it—there is, because they are not allowed to touch it, a better average healthiness than among any other class. Convince yourselves, then, that it is absolutely needless, and then judge yourselves of its effects. Do not take our testimony, but inquire. Go and catch with your own eyes a glimpse here and there of the black waves of this subterranean stream. Health is the most priceless boon of life. Go to our London hospitals, and ask how many are brought there by the awful diseases, the appalling accidents, the brutal violence of drink. Pauperism is the curse of cities; ask poor law guardians how paupers are made; ask any economist worth the name how pauperism can possibly be avoided when so much idleness is due to the £37,000,000—as much as all their rent—which, by the very lowest estimate, our poorest classes waste in drink. Lunacy is one of the worst inflictions of humanity; ask at any public asylum the percentage of it due to drink. Idiocy is one of the saddest phenomena of life. Ask any doctor how many idiots are born of drunken parents. Visit our camps and barracks, and there is not an officer who will not tell you that drink is the deadliest curse of our army. Visit our ships and seaports, and there is not a captain who will not tell you that drink is the worst ruin of our sailors. Go to any parish in town or country, all over the United Kingdom, where there are many public-houses and many poor,—and any clergyman will tell you that drink is the most overwhelming curse of our working classes. Philanthropists sigh for the dirt, the squalor, the misery, of our lowest classes. How can it be remedied so long as there is the maximum of temptation, where there is the minimum of wages to waste and the minimum of power to resist? Here, almost under the very shadows of the great towers of our Houses of Legislature, and within bowshot of this great Abbey, are streets in which house after house, family after family, is ruined or rendered miserable by this one cause; and, oh! how long will our Legislature still refuse to interfere? Oh that we could show them the misery of the innocent, the imbruting of the guilty; women broken-hearted, children degraded, men lowered beneath the level of the beasts; holidays changed into a bane, high wages wasted into a curse, the day of God turned into a day of Satan, our gaols filled, our criminal classes recruited, our workhouses rendered inevitable. This it was which made the late Mr. C. Buxton say that "the struggle of the school, the library, and the Church were united, and united in vain, against the beershop and the gin-palace," and that this struggle was "one development of the war between heaven and hell." Have we not a right to expect, have we not a right to demand, that in this struggle the Legislature should take their part?

7. Look at the statue of that glorious statesman who there

"with eagle-face and outstretched hand, still seems to bid England be of good cheer, and hurl defiance at her foes." Speaking of the proposal to use Indians against our American colonists, he burst into that memorable storm of words, which you all have read; —"I call upon that Right Reverend Bench. I conjure them to join in the holy work and vindicate the religion of their God. I call upon the bishops," he said, "to interpose the unsullied sanctity of their lawn; upon the learned judges to interpose the purity of ermine to save us from this pollution. I call upon your lordships to stamp upon it an indelible stigma of the public abhorrence. And I again implore those holy prelates of our religion to do away these iniquities from amongst us. Let them perform a lustration. Let them purify this house and this country from this sin." In his burning wrath of moral indignation, so stormed, so thundered the mighty Earl of Chatham, when it was proposed to let loose on our revolted colonists "the hellhounds of savage war." But against this hellhound of savage intoxication the bishops did then and the judges do now their very best to interpose. They, at least, can estimate, if any can, the connection of drink and crime. Have they failed to estimate it? There is scarcely a judge on the bench who has not spoken of it, till it has become a commonplace of the Courts of Justice. "It is not from men that are drunk," said one judge, "but from men that have been drinking, that most of the crime proceeds." "The worst is," said another, "that men enter the public-house sober, and, leave it felons." But for drink, others have said again and again, "not one of these cases would have been brought before me." "Do away with drink," say others, "and we may shut up two-thirds of our prisons." So they have said—well-nigh every one of them—and still the maddening wave of alcohol flows on, and sweeps legislators into Parliament upon its crest. And are these judges fanatics?—are they Pharisees? Or is it that they are forced to see what every one of us might see if we chose—a fearful and intolerable fact? The New Year dawned upon us five months ago with all its cheerful prophecies and jubilant hopes, and when it began I thought I would make a record of a few out of the thousands of awful crimes with which drink would blight and desecrate its history. Very soon I paused, sickened, horror-stricken. The crimes were too awful, to inhuman, sometimes too grotesque, in their pitiable horror. Other crimes are human crimes, but the crimes done in drink are as the crimes of demoniacs, the crimes of men who for the time have ceased to be men, and have become fiends. Oh! that these walls should hear them. Oh! that the angel of the nation might blot them out of his record with such tears as angels weep, to think that Christ, daily recrucified in the midst of us, should from His throne in heaven—

"See only this
After the passion of a thousand years."

I have some of them written here, but they are too black to tell you. Now it was a boy stabbing his father in a cellar in Liverpool; now a wife killing her husband with one savage blow; now a woman's suicide; now a little infant overlaid; now a drunken carman driving over a child, a woman, and a boy; now a man—— I dare not go on. I dare not describe the least bad, much less tell the worst. These things—these daily incidents of the year of grace 1878—Christian men and Christian women, are they unfit for your fastidious ears? Ah! but things are as they are, and it is not your fastidiousness that can undo them. And is it not an hypocrisy to shrink with delicate sensibility from hearing of crimes which are going on about you from day to day, and from week to week, and from year to year, while you do not shrink from the fact that they should be done, from the fact that they should be borne, by Englishmen like yourselves, done and borne by English women who might once have worn the rose of womanhood; done and borne by boys and girls who were once little bright-eyed children in our schools, and who, but for drink, might have grown up as happy and as sweet as yours. And if you are ashamed that these things should be, why do many of you not lift up one finger to prevent this mingled stream of crime and pauperism from pouring its deluge through our streets? For where are these things being done? In savage islands? among Pacific cannibals? among ancient Pagans, such as St. Paul describes? No, I declare to you that I find no records of such chronic horrors among them as I find, normally, daily, as incidents of ordinary life, as items of common news, happening now; happening to-day; happening in the midst of the nineteenth century after Christ; happening in Christian England; happening in Liverpool, in Dublin, in Glasgow, in Manchester; happening here under your minster towers. Here even in these streets hard by—oh, what a tale I could tell—the husband imprisoned for assaulting his wife; the son in gaol for striking his aged, miserable mother; the father deserting his family of little children; the son dishonouring his home; the man once rich now ruined; the woman barely snatched from agonising suicide. And, Christian men and Christian women, you wonder that our hearts are stirred within us when we see whole classes of a city—whole classes which should have been its marrow and its strength—thus given to drink! When will this indifference cease? When will a nation, half-ruined by her vice, demand what the Legislature will not then withhold? Sooner or later it must be so, or England must perish. Weigh the gain and loss—strike the balance. On the one scale put whole tons of intoxicating and adulterated liquor—put alcohol, at the very best a needless luxury; on the other side put £150,000,000 a year, and grain enough to feed a nation, and grapes that might have been the innocent delight of millions; and load the scale—for you must, if you would be fair—load it with

disease and pauperism, and murder, and madness, and horrors such as no heart can conceive and no tongue tell; and wet it with rivers of widows' and orphans' tears; and if *you* will not strike the balance, God will one day strike it for you. But will you, as Christian men and Christian women—will you, as lovers of your country and lovers of your kind—stand up before high God, and say that the one is worth the other? Will you lay your hand upon your heart, and say that these things ought so to be?

7. I stop at England. The half, alas, is not told you! The awful guilt remains that throughout all our colonies and dependencies, we, the proud race whose flag dominates the seas, and on whose empire the sun never sets—we, "wherever winds blow and waters roll, have girdled the world with a zone of drunkenness"; until, as I think of it—as I think of the curses, not loud, but deep, muttered against our name by races which our fire-water has decimated and our vice degraded, I seem to shudder as there sounds in my ear the stern inquiry to our country, "These things hast thou done, and I held my peace; and thou thoughtest wickedly that I was such an one as thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set before thee the things that thou hast done," and the menace of prophetic doom, "Shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord? and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"

8. But, oh! will not some one interfere before it is too late? Once in the camp of Israel there arose a wail of horror and of agony, "there is wrath gone out from the Lord; the plague is begun"; and, quick as thought, the High Priest Aaron took a censer, and put fire thereon from off the altar, and ran into the midst of the congregation, and put on incense, and stood between the living and the dead, and the plague was stayed. Will no one do it now? We are encircled by the immortal memorials of those who fought the slave-trade, and shattered the biblical and other sophisms of its defenders. In yonder aisle are the statues of Wilberforce and Raffles, and by the western door the liberated slave kneels, in immortal marble, by the deathbed of Fox, whose errors are forgotten, whose genius is ennobled, by his championship of that great cause—

> "Oh, God, for a man with head, heart, hand,
> Like some of the simple great ones gone
> For ever and ever by,
> Some still strong man in a blatant land,
> Whatever they call him, what care I?
> Aristocrat, autocrat, democrat—one
> Who can rule and dare not lie!"

Oh, for some man with the eloquence of these, and the same burning enthusiasm to redress the intolerable wrongs, to alleviate the needless miseries of man. Before the clear intellect, before

the fiery zeal of such a one, the flimsy sophisms of a pseudo-liberty, and the perverted pleas of a feeble literalism, would melt like tow at the breath of flame. Were it not better thus than to plunge into the heat of party squabbles, and win the evanescent triumphs of an hour? Will no one save a nation from multiplying, from legalising for itself a needless, an artificial, a self-created destruction? Oh, what a crown would such a man deserve! He would deserve a grander monument than Wellington's, a prouder statue than Chatham's self. The name, the memory of such a man should live when the names of many that are recorded here, and of most of the living statesmen who shall follow them, are covered with oblivion's dust. God grant us such a one to stand between the living and the dead, for the plague has indeed begun. They have been dying of it for two centuries; they are dying now, dying of disease, dying by violence, dying by suicide, dying in hospitals, dying in squalid garrets everywhere—strong men, miserable women, little children—dying so slowly that none call it murder. But if the drinkers cannot save themselves; if with their money they have drunk away their manliness, and with their sense of shame their power of will; shall not the nation save them—save them from themselves—save them from destroying temptation—save their wretched children, their wretched wives? The Legislature will not help us, because they tell us that as yet public opinion is not strong enough. Then in God's name let public opinion become strong enough! Let the working classes, who are mostly affected, take up this question. Let them snatch their order from this ruin. Let them cleanse it from this stain. What the senate refuses now, it cannot, it will not, it dare not refuse when a nation, knocking at its door with righteous and imperious demand, tells them that they are there to do its bidding. But as for us who are not senators, whose power is small, let us at least help to form this public opinion. Let us change this national sin of drunkenness into the national glory of self-control; let us become the Nazarites, as we have been the Helots, of the world. To hope for this has been called extravagant; nevertheless I do hope for it. If there are in England 600,000 drunkards, there are also in England, thank God, four million abstainers; and if without an iota of loss, and with an immensity of gain—if with stronger health, and clearer intellect, and unwasted means, to the great happiness of themselves, to the clear examples to others—there are *four* millions of every rank, and every position, and every degree of intellectual power, I, for one—believing noble things of man as I believe noble things of God—I for one do not see why there should be *many* millions. But if we cannot and will not save ourselves, let us save our children. If the wealth and peace of this generation is to be a holocaust to drink, let the next be an offering to God. Let us, as Wellington said at Waterloo, let us have young soldiers. Let

every young man in his strength, every maiden in her innocence and beauty, join the ranks of the abstainers. Let the manliness of the nation spring to its own defence, so that by a sense of shame and a love of virtue, if this evil cannot be suppressed by law, it may perish of inanition. If so, I see no end to the greatness of England, no limit to the prolongation of her power. If not, in all history, as in all individual experience, I see but this one lesson—no nation, no individual, can thrive so long as it be under the dominion of a besetting sin. It must conquer or be conquered. It must destroy it or be destroyed by it. It must strike at the source of it or be stricken down by it into the dust.
